

THE *Shadow*

DYNAMITE 17



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THE Shadow®

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«THIS WORLD IS
A VALE OF SHADOWS.
CORRUPTION AND VICE DRAG
PURE SOULS DOWN INTO
THE MUCK AND THE MIRE,
STAINING THEM FOR
ALL ETERNITY.»

«THE ORDER
EXISTS TO END THE
SUFFERING OF SOULS
IN TORMENT, AND TO
CLEANSE THEM OF
THEIR SINS.»



«AS IT HAS
BEEN SINCE THE
MOST ANCIENT OF DAYS,
SO IT MUST BE TODAY
AND TOMORROW.»



(ARE YOU PREPARED TO DEVOTE YOUR LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF THE ORDER, AND TO BRING LIGHT INTO A WORLD OF DARKNESS?)



(I AM.)



(THE CANDLE'S FLAME SYMBOLIZES THE PURE SPIRIT BURNING WITHIN US ALL.)



(THE FLESH IS TEMPORAL AND FLEETING, BUT THE SPIRIT IS ETERNAL.)



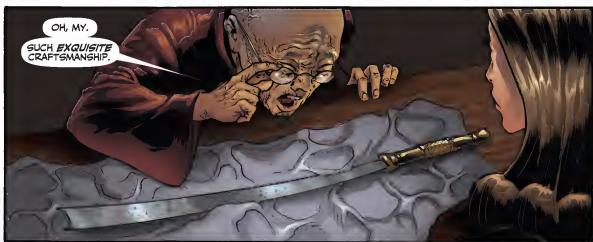
(THE LIGHT BURNS, BUT IS NOT CONSUMED. I AM THE LIGHT.)





ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR I CAN SHOW YOU, MISS?

NO, I'M NOT BUYING TODAY, THANK YOU.
I WAS ACTUALLY HOPING YOU COULD TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT *THIS*.



OH, MY.
SUCH *EXQUISITE* CRAFTSMANSHIP.



SO YOU'VE SEEN THIS
KIND OF SWORD BEFORE?
ANY IDEA WHERE IT'S
FROM?

OH, YES, BUT NEVER
ONE OF THIS QUALITY.
IT IS A "DHA," A TRADITIONAL
SWORD FROM SOUTHEAST
ASIA.



BASED ON THE
STYLE AND MARKINGS,
IT IS MOST LIKELY
VIETNAMESE IN
ORIGIN.

IN THE REGION
NOW KNOWN AS FRENCH
INDOCHINA.



I SEE.



ANY IDEA
WHO MIGHT HAVE
MADE IT?

OR WHEN?



I'M AFRAID
NOT.

ALL I CAN SAY
WITH CERTAINTY IS
THAT I HAVE NEVER SEEN
SUCH A SPLENDID
PIECE.





WELL, I'VE GOT
THE INFORMATION
ABOUT THE SWORD
YOU ASKED FOR.

DID YOU
GET WHAT YOU
WERE AFTER,
LAMONT?



I DID
INDEED.

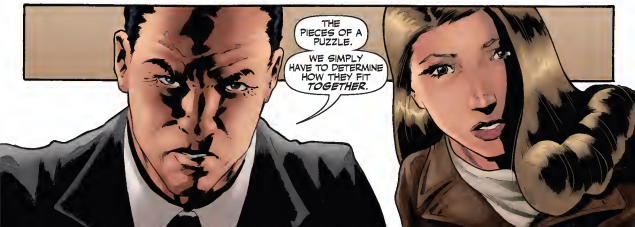
I FEEL AS THOUGH THE
LAST PIECES OF THIS MYSTERY
ARE FALLING INTO PLACE.











"THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE
KILLER KNOWN AS 'THE LIGHT'
WAS FOUND OUTSIDE GRAND
CENTRAL STATION LAST WEEK.

"HE WAS A MERCHANT SAILOR NAMED
VICTOR LARUE, ONLY RECENTLY ARRIVED IN THIS
COUNTRY, WHO HAD MADE NO OTHER PORTS OF
CALL SINCE LEAVING HIS NATIVE FRANCE.

"HE WAS KILLED WITH A
SHARP IMPLEMENT, NO DOUBT
THIS 'DNA' BLADE WHICH
ORIGINATED IN FRENCH
NORCHINA.

"LARUE WAS FROM A SMALL
MOUNTAIN VILLAGE IN THE
LANGUEDOC REGION OF FRANCE.
ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH
EMBASSY, HE HAD ONLY
RECENTLY LEFT HOME WHEN
HE WENT TO SEA.

"FROM THE IMMIGRATION OFFICES,
I WAS ABLE TO LEARN IF THERE HAD BEEN
ANY OTHER RECENT ARRIVALS IN THE CITY
FROM THAT REGION OF FRANCE."

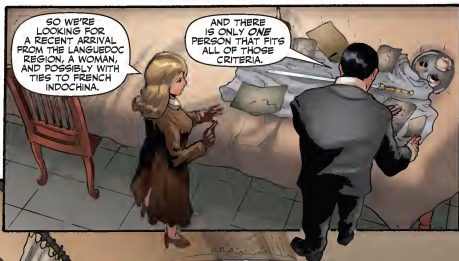
SO THE WORKING ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE LIGHT KILLED THIS LARUE BECAUSE SHE *KNEW* HIM.

OR RATHER, HE KNEW *HER*. THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY HE DOESN'T FIT THE PATTERN OF ALL OF THE OTHER VICTIMS. BECAUSE HE COULD *EXPOSE* HER.



SO WE'RE LOOKING FOR A RECENT ARRIVAL FROM THE LANGUEDOC REGION, A WOMAN, AND POSSIBLY WITH TIES TO FRENCH INDOCHINA.

AND THERE IS ONLY *ONE* PERSON THAT FITS ALL OF THOSE CRITERIA.



BORN IN FRENCH INDOCHINA OF MIXED EUROPEAN AND VIETNAMESE ANCESTRY, RAISED IN THE SAME LANGUEDOC VILLAGE AS VICTOR LARUE, RECENTLY ARRIVED IN NEW YORK.

THIS IS THE WOMAN THAT WE SEEK.



ESCLARMONDE NGUYEN.



I'VE
SEEN HER
BEFORE!
AT THE
HOSPITAL!



ARE YOU
CERTAIN?

YES, SHE WAS
ONE OF THE NURSES
I SPOKE WITH THE
OTHER DAY!



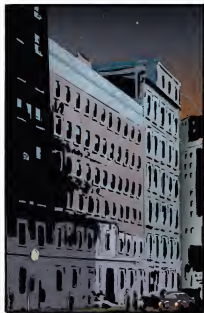
THAT WOULD
ACCOUNT FOR THE
MURDER AT THE
HOSPITAL.

THE KILLER
DIDN'T NEED TO
GET PAST THE POLICE
GUARDING THE ENTRANCE,
BECAUSE SHE WAS
ALREADY THERE.



SO WHAT
ARE WE GOING
TO DO?

THERE IS
NO TIME TO LOSE.
WE MUST ACT
BEFORE SHE STRIKES
AGAIN.



JUST LET ME
CHANGE THIS DRESSING
AND YOU SHOULD BE
READY TO GO.



SISTER
ESCLARMONDE, COULD
YOU FETCH A BIT
MORE GAUZE?

I THINK
THERE'S SOME
IN THE SUPPLY
ROOM.



RIGHT AWAY,
DOCTOR.



STORAGE
ROOM

CLICK

IS
THE BULB
OUT?

ARE YOU
AFRAID OF THE
DARK, SISTER
ESCLARMONDE?



YOU WILL
NOT KILL AGAIN.
HERE OR ANYWHERE
ELSE.

I AM
HERE TO STOP
YOU.

YOU WILL
NOT INTERFERE WITH
MY HOLY MISSION!





ESCLARMONDE
NGUYEN!

YOU
CANNOT ESCAPE
JUSTICE!

I AM
JUSTICE!

CRASH

NO.

SHE COULD
NOT POSSIBLY
SURVIVE A FALL
FROM SUCH A
GREAT...

HEIGHT.

MAN OF
SHADOWS, THE
TIME OF *YOUR*
JUDGMENT IS
AT HAND.



YOU ARE DRENCHED
IN SIN. YOU CLAIM TO SERVE
JUSTICE, BUT WEAR YOUR
CORRUPTION LIKE AN INKY
CLOAK.

THE LIGHT IS
HERE TO END YOUR
TORMENT.



YOU TALK OF SIN AND CORRUPTION,
WHILE CARVING OUT THE
VILEST MURDERS.

YOUR
DEFINITION OF
"JUSTICE" IS NOT
MINE.



I AM
THROUGH
RUNNING.

SO LET US
END THIS, HERE
AND NOW.

TO BE CONCLUDED...

DYNAMITE®

IN THE NEWS - SEPTEMBER 2013

DYNAMITE TO LAUNCH
LEGENDS OF RED SONJA PRESTIGE
MINI-SERIES FEATURING TOP FEMALE
NOVELISTS AND COMIC BOOK WRITERS



Following on the immense success of the newly launched *Red Sonja* ongoing series by Gail Simone, Dynamite proudly announces the upcoming *Legends of Red Sonja* prestige miniseries, an extravaganza celebrating the iconic fantasy heroine's long and storied career. *Legends of Red Sonja* is a collaborative effort uniting Simone with a star-studded and prestigious creative team including Marjorie Liu, Mercedes Lackey, Kelly Sue DeConnick, Rhianna Pratchett, Leah Moore, Tamara Pierce, Blair Butler, Nancy Collins, Meljean Brook, Nicola Scott, Devin Grayson, and more to be announced. Frank Thorne, one of the key artists responsible for defining the character's distinct look, will be among the artists to contribute cover artwork, as will Jay Anacleto.

"When it was first decided that I would be taking part in the relaunch of Red Sonja, we had what I thought was a very fun idea, which was to have all the covers and variant covers be drawn by top female artists," says Gail Simone, an industry legend with celebrated runs on *Birds of Prey*, *Secret Six*, and *Batgirl*. "The idea just took off, as some of my artistic heroes, people like Colleen Doran, Amanda Conner, and Nicola Scott all contributed these gorgeous, eye-popping pieces of art for the book. It made everyone tremendously happy and gave us a wonderful extra kick for our relaunch of this classic character. So when Dynamite told me that the 40th anniversary of Red Sonja was coming up, I thought, 'I wonder if we could do the same thing, but with all my favorite female writers?' I can't tell you how exciting this is for me, it's something I've wanted to do for years."

The structure of the *Legends of Red Sonja* prestige series will be, in Simone's words, "a braided story, with individual, unique stories written by titans of comics, prose, and the gaming world. These are all powerful voices whose work I adore. Dynamite asked me to make a list of the women I'd love to see included, and again, I was astounded at the eager responses! We have giants of the fantasy and horror prose world: Tamara Pierce, Nancy Collins, Mercedes Lackey, and Meljean Brook. We have some of the hottest comics talents: Marjorie Liu, Kelly Sue DeConnick, Leah Moore, Devin Grayson and

(in her first published story as a writer) Nicola Scott. And we have brilliant writers from games and television: Rhianna Pratchett and Blair Butler. Getting to hand-pick this crew of fierce women was an absolute joy, and the fun of it is we're all fans of Red Sonja and of each other. Throwing ideas back and forth and shaping the stories has been some of the most fun I've ever had in comics. I can't wait for people to read these takes on Red Sonja...some are funny, some are scary, some are very different versions of Sonja than we are familiar with!"

Many of Gail Simone's hand-picked contributors have shared their excitement about the project:

Rhianna Pratchett (*Heavenly Sword*, *Mirror's Edge*): "I treasured my Red Sonja poster when I was kid. So to get the opportunity to write a story for the character, and to do it in the company of such extraordinary, talented women, is a dream come true."

Leah Moore (*Doctor Who: The Whispering Gallery*, *Sperkoff Holmes*, *The Liverpool Demon*): "It's not everyday that Gail Simone asks me to write Red Sonja. To be honest, I'm glad, because when it happened, I had to be peeled off the ceiling. Writing Red Sonja has been a personal ambition of mine for a long time. She is about the most fun a writer can have."

Tamara Pierce (*The Song of the Lioness*, *Mast!ff*): "This is the coolest project ever: new stories crafted by some of the best writers and artists out there, about a woman warrior created by one of my literary idols, Robert E. Howard, spearheaded by my comics goddess, Gail Simone. I'm honored to be a part of this, and can't wait to see the whole thing."

Blair Butler (*Heart*, host of MSN's *Nerdcore*): "I'm honored and exceedingly intimidated to be included in this group of talented creators. Gail Simone is amazing -- and her take on Red Sonja is something I've been looking forward to since it was announced way back at Emerald City Comic-Con. So when she asked me to contribute, I agreed immediately, even though I'm totally nervous about it."

Nancy Collins (*Swamp Thing*, *VAMPS*): "I am thrilled to have been chosen by Gail Simone to participate in *Legends of Red Sonja*. I remember how excited I was when I plucked *Conan the Barbarian* #23 off the spinner rack as a kid, all those years ago, and finally saw a female hero capable of dishing it out with the best of them. I am honored to have been given this chance to add to Red Sonja's mythos."

Meljean Brook (*Iron Seas*, *Demon Angel*): "I'm absolutely thrilled to be writing a story for the she-devil, Red Sonja. I first encountered Red Sonja in the movie with Nielsen and Schwarzenegger when I was about eight years old -- and I know the movie isn't without its problems, but it's almost impossible to describe how incredible it was to watch a film in which the heroine was just as strong and as tough as the muscle-bound hero. Red Sonja was a revelation to eight-year-old me, and I can trace many of the heroines I write today back to those roots."

"Wow. Gail and the editorial team at Dynamite have put together an incredible team of creators - a prestigious and impressive list - on a series that celebrates one of the strongest female characters in comics. I can say that they have done an incredible job together, and I thank them," says Dynamite CEO and Publisher Nick Berrucci.

NEXT ISSUE:



ISSUE #18

All the mysteries will be solved as the Shadow and the Light face one another in a final confrontation high above the streets of New York! Two knights, each dedicated to a very different moral code, in a duel to the death!

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